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THE PIONEERS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

WILD OATS

DOCTOR RAST

MONDAY MORNING AND OTHER POEMS

THE PIONEERS

A POETIC DRAMA IN TWO SCENES

BY

JAMES OPPENHEIM

NEW YORK
B. W. HUEBSCH
1910

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TO

THE FAMILY

LANIER CAMP

A WORD

THIS little play had its first production at Lanier Camp on the banks of the Piscataqua, Eliot, Maine, at 8 o'clock of a dark August night. Under windy boughs and back of the shadows of a camp-fire several hundred people of the countryside, bewitched by the wind, the flames, and the night, were kind to the unprofessional players and the little play.

A native poetic drama which shall go straight home to the people of America rather than to a fit few in a private theater is the dream of the young writers of to-day. It is my dream too. Hence, what a rich joy it was to throw a plain tale of '49 into simple rhythm and find that the folk of southern Maine were stirred to tears. It meant, not that the play was great, but that America is hungry for expression, and even an inadequate attempt, if sincere, is worth making.

And it meant something else. It meant that

the little company of men and girls and boys who gave the play threw themselves so deeply into their parts that their very earnestness and fire evoked something precious in the audience. The names of those who lifted the text to reality belong to this book, and I give them.

THE CAST

JOHN HOWARD ..... Sidney Lanier, Jr.

MARGARET ..... Barbara Laighton

DAVID MORROW ..... Peter W. Dykema

CYNTHIA BURNS ..... Geraldine Slater

EAGLE-TALON ..... Bernard Sexton

CHADWICK ..... Bruce Hoggson

TOM ..... Trumball Thomas

(August 26, 1910)

CHARACTERS

JOHN HOWARD, *the Leader — a man of about forty-five, tall, gentle, executive, and full of the true fire of power — an outdoor man.*

MARGARET, *his daughter — a young woman, about twenty-one, a fine blend of the old and new type of woman, graceful, beautiful, but free and frank and companionable; very much like her father, but with deeper power of intuition — an outdoor woman.*

DAVID MORROW, *a young man with the party — about twenty-five, passionately egoistic, wedded to the conventional, a keen individualist, full of misdirected power, and yet overrunning with the possibilities of youth.*

CYNTHIA BURNS — *an unmarried woman of middle age, timid, home-bred, but following the party through her great personal love for* MARGARET.

CHADWICK, *the sentinel — a bluff, jovial man, unafraid of anything, and ready for any adventure, loyal and steadfast.*

TOM, *one of the younger men; a pleasant, dreamy fellow, who swears by his leader.*

EAGLE-TALON, *an Indian — large, swift, picturesque, slow and passionate in his speech.*

MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN

SCENE

The Night's Rest, in and about a grove on the Western Prairies. Trees about, in the center a camp-fire. Back in the shadows a large, white-hooded schooner-wagon. Guns against a tree; lantern on wagon. A moonlight summer's night. The great silence of the plains; not even the cry of the coyote heard; only the crackling of the fire and the sound of the wind in the trees. Year, about 1850.

THE PIONEERS

A POETIC DRAMA IN TWO SCENES

As action starts scene is empty. Enter PROLOGUE, *with hand raised for silence.*

PROLOGUE

Our fire paints the dark with jumping gold,
The bark of trees shows each black wrinkle, leaves
Sway sharp, and through the shadow-swallowed tree-tops
The low nocturnal music of the wind
Makes magic of the vast night. Hark! O hark!

[*Pauses, that audience may listen*]

Spirit of the wind! Spirit of the rising moon!
Night-spirit! Earth-spirit! I that lift my voice
I, too, am a spirit—you are brothers all

That sing and sigh and gleam and breathe
about me!
I charge you, mighty spirits, hear of me!
For I am that human spirit that dares all,
Rides you, O Wind, lights you, O Night, and
makes
Of you, O Earth, my home, my tool, my life.
What if you wrought me? What if your mighty
souls
Gave birth to me? I, too, give birth; I, too,
Create: and all my ages are
A pushing forward, hand in hand with nature,
And slow creation of a greater Earth.
From land to land through age on age I led,
Till now my new scene is—America;
My latest, greatest venture. To this coast
The world sends mightiest dreamers, hardiest
toilers,
Her pioneers, and here by weltering millions
They build a life that dares new heights, new
heavens,
Fired with democracy, till now at last
I am the Spirit of America!

[*A pause*]

That spirit was in the Pilgrims when they
knelt

On Plymouth Rock; and in the Puritans
Working their clearings in the wilderness;
And with the men that battled on Bunker Hill;
And with the vast migration that swung tides
Of people through the unadventured West;
That spirit rose like storm and shook the world
Gigantically in our home-spun Lincoln—
That spirit lives to-day: is here to-night:
For America is not the magic scenery
Washed by the sunrise and the sunset seas,
No, nor yet even the prairies dark with herds,
Or land-lakes of the Western grain: nor yet
Wonder-cities white-towered, nor the peaks
Bursting with metals, nor the smoky mills—
America is you and you and I.

[*Pause*]

And it is something else. It is the marriage
Of classic Europe with her dream-stuffed brain,
Her nimble fingers and her indoor art,
To Indian, outdoor, tan-faced, native, wild
America: the wigwam drips with rain,
The tasseled corn is blown with the wet wind,
Mist scarfs the mountain-brow, the hunting trail
Runs by gray pools in the splattering wilderness,

And the human being is like a breath of the Earth,
Wild with the power that swims in the soil and the air,
Panting with life and with love and desire to labor,
His nostrils quivering as he scents the ground.
Such, the American: the intricate thinker,
The lover and brother, and the pioneer
With that feel of Earth of him inured to the open.

[*During the following passage all the characters enter, two or three at a time, and group themselves about the camp-fire*]

Behold then just such real Americans
Stealing about this camp-fire, for our scene
Moves to the Western prairie, and the wind
Whispers two thousand miles from here, and the dark,
Painted with jumping gold, is full of danger;
For the pioneers, seeking the manless West,
Are lonely on the limitless, moonlit plains,
And the Indians circle them. Hark! now they lift
Their voices in song to drown out thoughts of peril,

And the sentinel, who paces up and down,
Shouts out: "All's well!"—O great America,
This little band is clearing out a way
For us that follow. Come, O friends, the Play!

SCENE I

SCENE I

As PROLOGUE *goes out,* TOM, *standing, strums "Home, Sweet Home," on the mandolin. All join softly in the chorus. At the end of song a deep pause, during which the sentinel outside cries twice:* "All's well—All's well—"

HOWARD

Stir up the fire, Tom, make it shoot sparks, blaze big,
For in this large room of the open Earth
Under the lifting roof of all the stars,
We must smell the good wood-smoke of our own hearth.
We are not lonely, we, so close to the ground,
Where the wild tang and flavor of the Earth
Absorb us in the Mother. All day long
We sweated in the sun; now, tired out,
The bones of our bodies sweet with a day's work done,
We nestle close to the rich restful soil.

[*Pause*]

MARGARET

[*close to her father, tenderly*]

Father, what is it?

HOWARD

[*taking her hand*]

What is what, dear Meg?

MARGARET

The trouble.

HOWARD

Trouble? Nothing.

MARGARET

But there is:
I feel it in your voice. Come, out with it!

HOWARD

If it's a trouble, it's a trouble shared,
And so, no trouble: all so close together,
We comrades like a dot on the vast prairies,
Here, in the midst of danger, life is sweet.
What do we lack?

MARGARET

Ah, father, *I* know *you:*
You cannot put me off! Your heart *is* troubled.

HOWARD

[*smilingly*]

Well, so it is: but a most loving trouble.
In truth, the song we sang carried me home,
Home, where all life was peace. [*Rises with* MARGARET]

[*A silence*]

TOM

How far away
New England is; the rough coast and the sea,
And the apple-heavy orchards.

CYNTHIA

And the homes,
Whitewashed and clean, set among quiet pastures.

HOWARD

The long, long Sabbaths and the sunny morns
We swung the scythe in the meadows. Wheat and corn—
I can see acres blooming. Oh, New England,
You are two thousand miles across the world.

TOM

Two thousand miles—have we trudged out so far?

HOWARD

Yes, and a thousand miles must still be trudged—
Farther and farther, as nearer and nearer we draw,
The Far West vanishes.

SEVERAL

[*like echoes*]

Vanishes—vanishes. It vanishes.

[*A deep pause*]

MARGARET

[*close to her father*]

And yet, father, had you to do it again,
You'd do just this.

HOWARD

[*shaking off his sadness*]

Yes, though it were
Ten thousand miles: come, Tom, strike up a tune
That sings the future, not the past, and stirs
Our hearts to courage. [*Seats himself*]

SENTINEL

[*outside*]

All's well!

[*All listen*]

[*Enter* CHADWICK, *the sentinel, armed*]

CHADWICK

[*jovially*]

Friends, all is well. Gazing out under the moon
I saw the whole huge circle of the horizon
One emptiness of moonlight; nothing stirs;
That rumor of the Indians we heard
As we went through the ford, was but false news;
And we may sleep to-night. There's not a fleck
Of black from here to the rim of the starry skies;
No, not a stir. [*Goes out*]

TOM

[*slowly*]

Vast is the prairie.

CYNTHIA

And still—
Listen! What a hush!

[*Silence*]

HOWARD

None but the savage ever
Has set foot here. The Earth is as the ages
Created it: primordeal, fresh and free.
How good to be the first to dare this land!
How glad I am we came! What's the man
worth
Who does not dare? What manly spirit ever
Refused to pioneer?

DAVID

[*rising, stepping forward, unable to restrain himself*]

I am that man.
John Howard, I have something on my mind
That I can bear no longer. The time's come
To speak what smothers in my breast, and say
The worst.

[*All look up, amazed, though some with quick appreciation and sympathy*]

HOWARD

[*gently*]

Why, David, speak, that's the man's way.

DAVID

[*bursting out*]

Why are we here? This senseless, useless journey?

HOWARD

[*still gently*]

Do you ask that, after two thousand miles?

DAVID

[*storming*]

I can hold it back no longer. For my own reasons
I followed you: and I've not murmured once
As all the long day hand-to-hand with the sun
I whipped the dogged horses, set my heels
Deep in the sand and tugged at the creaking reins;
When I went thirsty, I have said nothing of it;
When I went hungry, not one word, and when
I limped with swollen foot, not once I cursed.
But now I can bear it no longer: out with it!
Why, in the name of all that's possible
Are we on this fool's errand? If some night
The red men round us up, and shoot us like dogs

Our blood is on your head. Back in the East
I told you so, but you—turned to the women,
Spoke of some vision, reached their hearts with words,
And stopped your ears to the facts. By heaven, Howard,
What right had you to lead these little children
On a mad quest in a bare desert, where death
Circles our footsteps? El Dorado? Tell
That tale to women!

HOWARD
[*gently*]
Many have eyes, David,
And yet they *will* not see.

DAVID
[*angrily*]
See what? I see
Daylong the red and rolling prairie stretch
Under the cruel circle of the sky.
Up from the East the swollen copper sun
Lifts through a copper smoke, and the burnt air
Palpitates, and up and over the hillocks
The long white line of our schooner-wagons
Creeps like a worm from one huge sky-cocoon

Into another, and on those moving floors
The worried women sink and the children cry
Not knowing what ails them. This I see, and more.
I see behind each bush an Indian.
Perhaps even now somewhere are galloping horses
And the armed braves chanting as they race with the moon.
Silently from afar they come; they coil
Like a snake about us, and we die the death
Horribly.

[*Pauses*]

In this place of empty silence
What help is there?

HOWARD

[*gently*]

Why, in ourselves, as ever.

DAVID

But where's the end? Each day's without an end.
We have tramped three months and more. For what? A dream.

[*His voice breaks*]

Better our narrow acres in New England,
Green, sweet with merciful rains, and the great sea
Pounding on the rocks of the beach. Our dooryards bloomed
With corn and children's faces. Life was good.
But you uprooted us. Now must you answer
For our agony.

[*Pauses*]

HOWARD

[*rising, putting his hands on* DAVID'S *shoulders*]

I cannot answer.—
But now that you have spoken, David, boy,
And all's cleaned out within, do you think it well
To talk of danger while we are in danger?
We are here; we cannot escape; what help is it
To pour out all these fears?

DAVID

[*hanging his head*]

I—had to speak.

[*Goes off in the shadows*]

HOWARD

Come all, you know that Mary's son is ill,
Down in the third large wagon. Let us go,
And smooth the lad's night-rest.

CYNTHIA

Yes, let us go.

[*All go, save* DAVID, *who touches* MARGARET'S *arm*]

DAVID

I want to see you, Margaret.

MARGARET

See *me*, David?

[*She lingers, and he does not speak till all are gone. Then he comes close*]

DAVID

The things I said to-night—

MARGARET

[*unutterably sad*]

Yes, what of them?

DAVID

I had to say them.

MARGARET

Yes, you had to say them.

DAVID

I'm much ashamed—

MARGARET

You ought to be ashamed.

DAVID

[*low*]

But I was not thinking solely of myself—

MARGARET

Not solely?

DAVID

No [*hesitates*]. Shall I tell you, Margaret,
Why I have come here?

MARGARET

Is it a thing to say,
Or better left unsaid?

DAVID

I *must* speak out.

MARGARET

You have before—but tell me, why have you come?

DAVID

[*bursting out*]

You—Margaret—you, you are the reason, you.

MARGARET

[*shrinking*]

It had been better never to have said this.

[*Starts to go*]

DAVID

[*sharply*]

You must not go. I have come two thousand miles,
Dared all for you. Is this my answer then?
No love for me?

MARGARET

[*controlling herself*]

Oh, David, do not ask me;
I will not trust a love I can't respect.
No, no, your place is in the East where women

Are kitchen-things, and men are hard and keen,
Shrewd Yankees. Not for you the New Great West!

DAVID

[*wooingly*]

Oh, but I know what is in your heart—to-night
In the soft hush of this grove and under moonlight
Your heart cries out that you and I were born
For one another.

MARGARET

[*struggling*]

David! [*A pause*] I'll use plain words:
Do you think that you who cannot grasp the greatness
Of my own father, ever will understand me?
I'm not so keen for marriage—marriage, David,
Is not the all of woman's life, and better
No marriage than wrong marriage. For there comes
Upon the earth a newer kind of woman,
And there must come a newer kind of man
To be that woman's mate.

DAVID

[*muttering*]

A woman's a woman.

MARGARET

No, more than that, she is a human being—
And I can see her as I would have her, David:
Athletic, sinewy, sun-tanned she must be,
Able to run, dive, lift, and leap the hurdle,
Free in her actions, with the world to range,
And yet a mother beautiful, a wife
Gentle and sweet; a being who takes the dust,
The bread-things and the broom-things, makes of them
Vital adventures. This is my comrade woman.
She must be man so far as freedom goes,
And yet all wrought of the eternal woman,
The graceful beauty and the lovely manner.
But a new manhood must arise to mate her,
A manhood as heroic as the old,
Unafraid of roughness, sweat and life's fine dangers,
Meeting the whole thick fighting world in the open,
Light-hearted, joyous, hardy—yet, and yet,
Unafraid also of the woman-things—

Quite unashamed of tenderness and goodness,
With a heart large enough to house all moods
Of beauty and music and the old chivalry.
He must be woman so far as sweetness goes,
And yet all wrought of the eternal man,
The creative worker and the woman's protector:
These are my man and woman. [*Pause*]
David, I
Would hurt no heart, least of all yours. Oh,
rather
I'd hurt myself—rather I'd scold myself—
Knowing—yes, candidly—that all my soul
Is touched, I know not why—

DAVID
[*turning suddenly*]
In spite of talk!
Why, it's your father, stuffing your brain with
words,
But deep beneath, you—love me.

MARGARET
[*tearfully*]
No more, David.

DAVID
[*exultant*]
You do—you do—

MARGARET

No more, I'll hear no more.
We two would be unhappy.

DAVID

But you love me—

MARGARET

I—I—*what's that?*

[*They turn, a crash of bushes; a shot, and a loud cry in the distance,* "Who goes there?"]

DAVID

My God, just as I said, the Indians!

MARGARET

What's wrong? what's wrong?

[DAVID *seizes a gun and starts forward: at the same moment cries of women in the camp, crashing of underbrush, and* HOWARD *comes rushing in, musket in hand, followed by the others*]

HOWARD

[*shouting*]

Who goes there? Stand, or we fire!

A Voice

[*huskily*]

Wait!

[*An Indian, covered with mud and dust, staggers in, breaking through the crowd in his speed*]

Eagle-Talon

[*halting, hand on heart to protect himself, with shrill gasps*]

White-man's friend—I—Eagle-Talon—I.

[*Falls exhausted; two of the women give piercing screams; the men clutch him and crowd over him*]

Howard

[*pulling the men off*]

Make room! stand back! Quick, Eagle-Talon, speak!

[*A pause*]

Eagle-Talon

[*looking up; gasping*]

They come, the red men come!

[*An intense hush*]

CYNTHIA

[*in a shrill whisper*]

The Indians!

[*Suppressed cries*]

HOWARD

Tell me—which way! which way!

EAGLE-TALON

[*on one knee, gasping, pointing*]

They come
Out of the blue hills on their flying horses,
Quick as the north wind—and their tomahawks flash,
Their rifles glisten.

[*Rises, speaks in guttural voice, gestures dramatically*]

Last night in the sand
They crouched around the circle of the war-dance,
Chopping the earth and chanting the death-chant.
Under the waning moon I saw the warriors,
Naked, all daubed with paint—and Eagle-Talon

He, white-man's friend, he knew.

[*Taps his chest*]

As comes the dawn,
He came: he say, put bullets in your rifles,
He say, make fight. Plenty of Indian comes.

HOWARD

How near, how near?

EAGLE-TALON

[*lifts his hands with fingers extended*]

As close on Eagle-Talon
As these few miles.

HOWARD

[*turning; in a slow, masterful voice*]

Men, get your rifles. See the women stowed
Under the shelter of the wagons. Make
A breastwork of the horses. Each mind keen,
Hands steady and hearts calm. We'll meet the foe
With all the white man's might. Come, to your work!

[*All hurry out, save* DAVID, *who detains* MARGARET]

DAVID

Now that we two may die, O Margaret, speak.

MARGARET

[*hastily*]

It is too late.

DAVID

One word, one loving word.

MARGARET

[*with rising voice*]

David, go in the fight like a real man.

DAVID

Is that all, Margaret?

MARGARET

[*bursting out*]

What, shall we stand
Back here and talk? The men are waiting for you.
Go, go at once. Face the great terrible moment.
The time for men has come.

[*Goes out*]

[*Re-enter the men, armed. They look right and left, and are about to go out when* HOWARD *speaks. During the speech the actions of* DAVID *are dramatic—at first listless—then powerful*]

[EAGLE-TALON *disappears*]

HOWARD

[*gathering them*]

Draw near and listen: there is breathing time.
You, you, and you, draw closer; bring your souls,
For I would put a fire into them.
Men, now we strike for all that we have sought—

[*As he speaks,* DAVID *begins to show interest*]

Out of the soft and easy East we came
To found the future in the perilous West.
Many will say we took the Western trail
For gold—well, so we did; but something vaster
Swallows that purpose. We have come for *life*—
Life richer, thicker, happier, more intense—

The life I lived one morning I remember—

[*Breaks off as* EAGLE-TALON *enters; in a quick whisper*]

Is there a moving shadow in the moonlight?

EAGLE-TALON

No shadow steals, but Eagle-Talon sees!

[*Goes*]

HOWARD

[*repeating*]

The life I lived one morning I remember—

[*Pauses; voice becomes melodious, a letting down of the tension; he sends the men dreaming.* DAVID *half kneels*]

Upon that morning heaven was still and blue,
The air had a cool ecstasy, the light
Such delicate clearness that trees out a mile
Stood vivid, cut with shadow, and the river
Was a blue silence dropped between still shores,
The huddled grass was dewy, bobolinks
Drenched the cool orchard with a spray of song,
And children wandered singing in the sun.
It seemed as if my senses and my soul
Were bathed in the deep morning, for my body

Was glad, my eyes exulted, and my ears
Heard heavenly music. Men and women all
Gathered, and with spontaneous unison
Sang all the morn out. That was life, deep-lived:
For such, we search—

[*Goes on in rousing voice;* DAVID *looks up*]

We heard that call of God
Which sounds down all the ages, youth's own vision,
That cry: "Arise, arise, and follow me."

[DAVID *rises, his face lit with new power*]

[*Enter* EAGLE-TALON]

[HOWARD *speaks quickly in an aside*]

Sharp, at the first fleck, come.

[*Exit* EAGLE-TALON]

Follow me where? Into the fulness of life,
Into a richer world. There lies the West,
A breast of Earth all fallow and unused,
Where we may build the vision we have seen:
A life that grows out of the Earth like trees,
Taking its growth from the soil and the sun and the air,

A life of comrades laboring together,
Where many hands lighten for each the task,
A life of joy that springs from labor done,
Of song and dance and natural festival,
A life where children may fulfil their promise—
O to be out there! to work with the hand and the brain!
To fight the Indians of the long day's work,
Our weapons plow and broom! To sleep beneath
Seen stars! to be as free as the veering winds!
That is our West, and for such stakes we fight.
We cannot lose: we have the future with us!

ALL

Hurrah! hurrah!

[*Enter* EAGLE-TALON]

EAGLE-TALON

Many small shadows—far and far, great chief!

[*Goes out*]

[*By main force of gesture*, HOWARD *keeps the men back*]

HOWARD

Now these few sharp, terse words: let each one tell:
Aim low and waste no bullets. Keep together.
Back every bullet with your heart and soul.
Think of our women, our little children, our West,
Our God.

[*Listens*]

Hark! what is that comes down the wind?
Is it the foe?

[*Silence*]

[*Enter* EAGLE-TALON]

EAGLE-TALON

Their horses gallop and their tomahawks flash:
They chant the war-cry!

MANY

They come—they come—they are upon us—

[*Start to go.* HOWARD *again restrains them*]

HOWARD

Then—one word more. We are such friends as never

May gather once again. In this great hour
Let us, if need be, offer up our lives
For one another, and if death should come,
Know that the way up still is strewed with death,
And we but add ourselves to those great millions
Who made it possible for us to live:
Steady, with sure eye, and with burning hearts,
Come! Answer their cries with silence! Come!

ALL

We come!

[*They dash out after their leader*]

[*Shots; in the distance the shrill, blood-curdling* "Yow-ow-ow!" *of the war-cry*]

DAVID

[*aside to* MARGARET *with a great cry*]

I go to die, remember me.

MARGARET

Oh, David,
I see a hope for you.

DAVID

A hope? Why then
I go to fight and win.

[*Rushes out*]

[MARGARET *is alone with* CYNTHIA]

CYNTHIA

[*panic stricken*]

Shall we stay here? Is it safe?

MARGARET

[*hurrying up and down*]

I hear the war-cry.
Listen! [*Sounds of the war-cry and shots*]
I cannot stay here—no—I cannot—

CYNTHIA

It *is* not safe.

MARGARET

[*with a cry*]

Safe? Who wants safety now?
Life in itself is unsafe; ends in death,
Or now or then. What, while the men fight, I
To stay behind?

CYNTHIA

[*clutching her arm, crying out*]

You do not mean to go?

MARGARET

I must, I must.

CYNTHIA

But you—you cannot fight—

MARGARET

The woman's place is with the man—not fight? Then I will bind the wounds. [*Rushes out.* CYNTHIA *following*]

[*The war-cry heard, shots in many directions, going out farther and farther; cries; the woods full of battle. Noise dies in distance. A long silence*]

SCENE II

SCENE II

The same: the fire is low. Enter, slowly, solemnly, at a dead-march pace, their heads bowed, four of the men, carrying a heavy dead load in a blanket. This they lay gently on the ground before the fire. Features of JOHN HOWARD *seen in blanket. All characters gather, look down, broken with silent grief;* MARGARET *has head on* CYNTHIA'S *breast.*

[*A deep pause*]

DAVID

How many dead?

TOM

Two others, and our captain.

[*Silence*]

[*Enter* CHADWICK, *running, covered with dust, forehead bound up*]

CHADWICK

[*exultant*]

We have run the enemy down beyond the ford. The fight is won; the fight is ours.

DAVID

[*holding up his hand*]

Soft!

Look—here!

[*They all stand away.* CHADWICK *sees the body*]

CHADWICK

[*starting forward*]

What! He? Oh, God, why was I spared to-night?

[*Sobs, turns, puts his head in his hands*]

MARGARET

[*staggering forward*]

My father!

[*Sinks over the body*]

[*Silence*]

TOM

I saw him die. It was when he led out
On the last sally; like the truest soldier
He fell face forward.

[*Silence;* CYNTHIA *lifts* MARGARET *and leads her away*]

DAVID

[*stands over body, softly covers it over with ends of blanket, then speaks*]

Others he saved, himself he could not save.
O spirit beautiful and strong, O heart
Of the great father who spread out his wings
And gathered us under—manliest man of all.
He is dead, and we shall give him to the Earth,
He is dead, and all our hearts are buried with him,
He is dead, but in his death we doubly live.

[*A pause*]

[DAVID *half-kneels and looks down at the face*]

John Howard, is it possible that you
Who but two hours since poured out your soul
Among us, have quite vanished from this place?
No, when you fell, your spirit rose and swept
Into our souls, and there it lives and works,
Remaking us. How death does clear men's eyes!
Oh, now I see! [*Rises.*] I from henceforth take up
The vision and the labor he laid down,
I from henceforth shall make the young man's quest,
Blaze the long trail into the sunset land.

No more for me the easy ways of life,
No more the toil for self, the false content,
But the large dangers of the Earth, the sweat
Of daily work, and charging all, the spirit
Of trying life out, the divine adventure.
I swear this hour to be henceforth his knight,
Armed with his faith. I swear it!

ALL

We swear! We swear!

DAVID

Then bear the body to the naked plains,
And under the moon make burial. [*Leaning again*]
Oh, John Howard,
We give you Godspeed, and we dream to-night
You have stepped forth from the poor body of Earth
Upon some new adventure yonder, yonder,
In that great West we all shall shortly reach.
Godspeed, Godspeed! Our voices die on earth:
The stars receive you. Bear the body forth!

[*They start forward to take the body, but* MARGARET *comes and half-kneels—speaks as if she could not speak*]

MARGARET

Father, as you would have it, so I speak:
Goodby, your daughter is enough like you,
To face this hour. Goodby, O noblest father,
O greatest man and comrade—

[*Her voice breaks; she cannot continue, and* CYNTHIA *again lifts her up. The men bear out the body, and all the others go, including* CYNTHIA, *who leaves* DAVID *and* MARGARET *alone. A pause*]

DAVID

[*to* MARGARET]

His death has been my birth. He is my father
As he is yours; and I am a new man.
Believe me, Margaret.

MARGARET

[*yielding*]

I resist no longer.
David, my David!

DAVID

Margaret! [*A pause*]
Now in this solemn hour of our lives

I see the vision. Not of higher manhood,
No, nor yet even of higher womanhood.
The vision is of higher humanhood:
The man, the woman, and the little child,
Humaner, humaner, richer in all life.
We two shall live that life in one long quest,
Come, let us forth, forth to the spacious West.

[*They go out,* DAVID'S *arm about her. As the scene empties the speaker of the epilogue slowly enters, advances to front, raises his hand, and murmurs:* "Hush!"]

[*A pause*]

EPILOGUE

We little human beings have our day,
Then vanish from the Earth. All we to-night
Shall soon be but a memory in the world,
Our faces not among those newer faces—
Yet are we deathless. Even as the great past
Lives, lives in us, each cell of blood and brain,
Each blend of spirit and vision and large dream
Wrought of the mighty lives that went before,
So we bend over the unborn beautiful future,

Out of our flesh create it, breathe in it
Our faiths and loves, and lo, when it is born
Our spirits dwell in it, our faces shine in it!
So let us now and then turn to the past,
As we have done this day, and live it over;
That we may see the daring and the faith
Of men and women, real and live as we,
Who made this land and us; that we may drink
Of their strong lives, that we may recollect
That only a great vision brings great deeds,
That only hearts heroic, restless hands
And unafraid spirits push the soul's frontiers
Into a richer life: which lesson learnt
Let us build up our brief and hurrying day
Into such greatness that in some far hour
Our children, gathered as we gather now,
Shall re-enact our history and there find
New faith, new courage, and new enterprise.
Hush—for the wind is murmuring in the boughs,
The night-wind, and the Earth beneath our feet,
Our common Mother, gathers her children close,
We comrades, and with hearts attuned to dreams,

We find us strangely alive in a strange world.
Stars scatter about us climbing thicker and higher
Up to the breathless zenith and our Earth
Rolls, on this night, among them. O rich Earth,
Yet but a fringe on the rich star-filled skies,
And we but atoms riding on that fringe!
O mystery! O Power enfolding us!
O Power within us! Somehow it is glorious
Even to ride this narrow fringe and be
As nothings in the boundlessness of night—
There is such room for the future, such vast worlds
Yet to be lived, such far adventures calling
Yonder in Mars or some hid planet dim
In the Milky Way. Oh, let us fling our lives
In with God's life, and in our little corner,
Our cranny of Earth, make our part of the world
Deathlessly great. So was the Past, so be
Our living Present, and let us remember
How we bright creatures came this hour together,
Our hearts as one, and under whispering boughs

Caught a brief glimpse of the divine white
light
That bares the future. Friends, Good-night!
Good-night!

END

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